



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 58th Transportation Battalion
3rd Chemical Brigade
451 Colorado Avenue, Unit 8
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473

ATSN-CBC

14 July 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE Distribution

SUBJECT: Command Policy Memo #27, Religious Accommodation

1. According to DA PAM 600-75, "It is the Army's policy to approve requests for accommodation of religious practices that will not adversely impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, or discipline or otherwise interfere with the performance of the soldiers military duties." AR 600-20, paragraph 5-6 addresses specific worship, dietary, medical, and wear and appearance issue of religious practices.
2. All members of this command will provide for and enable the free exercise of religion as stated in the U.S. Constitution by accommodating the religious practices of soldiers of all religions in accordance with government statutes and regulations. By supporting a soldier's spiritual life, we contribute to a more motivated soldier and a more effective unit. Everyone will show respect to others regardless of their religious preference and will not make any derogatory remarks or single out soldiers negatively because of their religion.
3. There is some controversy over what constitutes a religion since there are many "non-traditional" religions represented in today's Army. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: "to be a bona fide religious belief entitled to protection under either the First Amendment or Title VII, a belief must be sincerely held, and within the believer's own scheme of things religious." The U.S. Supreme Court further clarified in the 1981 case *Thomas vs. Review Board* that "religious beliefs need not be acceptable, logical, consistent, or comprehensible to others in order to merit First Amendment protection." The point of these statements is that we must support other faiths even if we don't agree with or understand them, and there are a great variety of acceptable religious practices.
4. Use the battalion chaplain's expertise to help you make decisions regarding request for religious accommodation. In the EIT environment, soldiers are under more control and do not have the same privileges as permanent party soldiers, but we can accommodate many request. If there is any question about a soldier's sincerity, contact the chaplain to counsel the soldier to determine the sincerity and validity of any request.
5. Typical IET Accommodation Issues.
 - a. Worship. If a soldier requests to worship in his or her own tradition and there is not a worship service offered that meets those needs, we are to offer the soldier a place and time to worship. This will usually be on Sunday mornings when the majority of worship services take

place, although exceptions can be made for other days. The soldier must have a buddy present, and the soldier must be in a supervised area, which means not having closed doors and having a cadre member, chaplain, or chaplain assistant in the immediate vicinity. The soldier or soldiers can meet informally in a room in the company area, battalion offices, or outside of weather permits. Individual worship of this type usually consists of prayer, meditation, reading of sacred works, and simple rituals that are safe and within regulations.

b. Religious Literature. Soldiers can keep in their wall locker and on their person a book of scripture or sacred writings and other religious literature that supplements or explains the scripture writings. Other religious literature includes devotional books, religious tracts, counseling booklets from Chaplain, and inspirational booklets or pamphlets. Handwritten notes are also acceptable. The overall guidelines to determining acceptable scripture or literature is if it is essential to the practice of one's religion and provides spiritual encouragement. The books and literature must fit neatly in the soldier's wall locker and not take up space intended for other necessary items. Soldiers can read these materials during personal time and during the day as long as it doesn't interfere with training and they have not been instructed to be doing another task or reading their SMART book (i.e. during break times).

c. Soldiers can wear religious items such as rosaries, crosses, and religious medallions as long as they are not visible under the uniform and do not interfere with the proper wearing of the uniform or with training (i.e. when they make too much noise or move about too much during PT). Soldiers can also carry these items in their pocket. They can wear one religious item such as a cross or other religious symbol on their ID tag chain.

6. This memorandum supercedes all previous memorandums on this subject.

7. POC this memorandum, SFC Strange, 596-6351, or strangel@wood.army.mil.

8. WE SET THE STANDARD!

Robert T. Hixon
LTC, TC
Commanding